

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 PA-04

RSC-01 USIA-15 PRS-01 SP-03 IO-14 OMB-01 SAM-01 SS-20

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R 251621Z APR 74

FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7564

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

USINT DAMASCUS

UNCLAS BEIRUT 4896

EO 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, PFOR, LE, IS

SUBJECT: LOCAL MEDIA REACTION TO RABIN'S ASSUMPTION OF LABOR PARTY
LEADERSHIP

1. ALTHOUGH WE WOULD NOT WISH EXAGGERATE ITS SIGNIFICANCE, MORE
RESPECTABLE SEGMENTS OF BEIRUT PRESS HAVE GREETED NEWS OF GEN.
RABIN'S ASSUMPTION OF ISRAELI LABOR PARTY LEADERSHIP AND HIS
ATTEMPT TO FORM NEW GOVERNMENT AS WELCOME DEVELOPMENT IN CON-
TEXT OF CURRENT ME PEACE EFFORT. PREDICTABLY, LEFTIST, PRO-
FEDAYEEN AND LIBYAN-BACKED PAPERS HAVE GENERALLY TRIED TO HEAP
RIDICULE ON RABIN AS "KISSINGER'S STOOGES" AND PORTRAY HIS ELECTION
AS PART OF US "PLOT" TO CONVEY FALSE IMAGE OF ISRAELI "MODERATION"
IN ORDER FURTHER CONVINCE ARABS THAT PEACEFUL SETTLEMENT IS
ATTAINABLE.

2. INDEPENDENT AN NAHAR APRIL 24 CARRIED REMARKABLY OBJECTIVE
BIOGRAPHIC DESCRIPTION OF RABIN, EMPHASIZING HIS AVERSION TO
PUBLICITY AND SOCIAL FRIVOLITIES, HIS PENCHANT FOR HARD WORK, AND
HIS PROFOUND UNDERSTANDING OF POLITICAL AND MILITARY ISSUES
WRAPPED UP IN ME CONFLICT. EDITORIALY, NAHAR DESCRIBED
RABIN AS AN ISRAELI "MODERATE" WHOSE VIEWS RE PEACEFUL SETTLE-
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MENT ARE CONSIDERABLY AT VARIANCE WITH THOSE OF MRS. MEIR. IT

CREDITED HIM WITH HELPING TO TONE DOWN ISRAELI POLITICAL AND MILITARY POLICIES SINCE OCTOBER WAR TO POINT WHERE SECRETARY KISSINGER--AFTER HAVING WON SADAT'S CONFIDENCE--NOW HAS "LISTENING EARS" IN TEL AVIV. DESPITE CONTINUING OBSTACLES TO PEACE, INCLUDING THOSE BEING POSED BY SYRIAN AND PALESTINIAN HARD-LINERS, SAID NAHAR, RABIN'S ELECTION AS LABOR PARTY LEADER IS ANOTHER SIGN THAT CURRENT ME SETTLEMENT EFFORT HAS CHANCE OF SUCCESS. PAPER EXPRESSED HOPE THAT SECRETARY KISSINGER "WILL M ZBLSSU#HOPE".

3. INDEPENDENT AL BAYRAQ UNDERLINED "FIRM FRIENDSHIP" EXISTING BETWEEN KISSINGER AND RABIN, NOTING THAT LATTER'S COMING TO POWER IS STEP IN RIGHT DIRECTION TOWARD JUST AND LASTING ME SETTLEMENT--"NOT BECAUSE RABIN IS A DOVE, BUT BECAUSE HE UNDERSTANDS SERIOUSNESS OF BLOWS WHICH ISRAEL SUFFERED DURING OCTOBER WAR AND LATER ON GOLAN FRONT AND BECAUSE HE IS ACUTELY AWARE THAT ARABS ARE SOLIDLY UNITED ON QUESTIONS OF REGAINING OCCUPIED TERRITORIES AND RESTORING PALESTINIAN RIGHTS". BAYRAQ PREDICTED SECRETARY KISSINGER WILL FIND IT EASER TO "PERSUADE" RABIN AND ISRAELIS LIKE HIM OF NEED FOR ISRAELI FLEXIBILITY RE SETTLEMENT EFFORT, IN CONTRAST TO HIS "TROUBLES"WITH "TRADITIONAL" LEADERS SUCH AS MRS. MEIR AND MOSHE DAYAN.

4. ANOTHER ARAB TRIBUTE TO RABIN HAS COME, PERHAPS UNCONSCIOUSLY, FROM YASIR 'ARAFAT, WHO REPORTEDLY TOLD LEBANESE PHALANGIST LEADER PIERRE GEMAYEL ON APRIL 24 THAT HE CONSIDERS RABIN'S ELECTION AND NOMINATION AS NEXT PRIME MINISTER AS "BEGINNING OF AN IMPORTANT CHANGE IN ISRAELI VIEWS REGARDING PALESTINIAN PEOPLE, WHOSE EXISTENCE MRS. MEIR ALWAYS FIRMLY DENIED".
GODLEY

NOTE BY OC/T: #AS RECEIVED.

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